

§ 1.31

37 CFR Ch. I (7–1–15 Edition)

status is no longer appropriate. A notification that micro entity status is no longer appropriate will not be treated as a notification that small entity status is also no longer appropriate unless it also contains a notification of loss of entitlement to small entity status under § 1.27(f)(2). Once a notification of a loss of entitlement to micro entity status is filed in the application or patent, a new certification of entitlement to micro entity status is required to again obtain micro entity status.

(j) Any attempt to fraudulently establish status as a micro entity, or pay fees as a micro entity, shall be considered as a fraud practiced or attempted on the Office. Improperly, and with intent to deceive, establishing status as a micro entity, or paying fees as a micro entity, shall be considered as a fraud practiced or attempted on the Office.

(k) If status as a micro entity is established in good faith in an application or patent, and fees as a micro entity are paid in good faith in the application or patent, and it is later discovered that such micro entity status either was established in error, or that the Office was not notified of a loss of entitlement to micro entity status as required by paragraph (i) of this section through error, the error will be excused upon compliance with the separate submission and itemization requirements of paragraph (k)(1) of this section and the deficiency payment requirement of paragraph (k)(2) of this section.

(1) Any paper submitted under this paragraph must be limited to the deficiency payment (all fees paid in error) required for a single application or patent. Where more than one application or patent is involved, separate submissions of deficiency payments are required for each application or patent (see § 1.4(b)). The paper must contain an itemization of the total deficiency payment for the single application or patent and include the following information:

(i) Each particular type of fee that was erroneously paid as a micro entity, (*e.g.*, basic statutory filing fee, two-month extension of time fee) along with the current fee amount for a small or non-small entity, as applicable;

(ii) The micro entity fee actually paid, and the date on which it was paid;

(iii) The deficiency owed amount (for each fee erroneously paid); and

(iv) The total deficiency payment owed, which is the sum or total of the individual deficiency owed amounts as set forth in paragraph (k)(2) of this section.

(2) The deficiency owed, resulting from the previous erroneous payment of micro entity fees, must be paid. The deficiency owed for each previous fee erroneously paid as a micro entity is the difference between the current fee amount for a small entity or non-small entity, as applicable, on the date the deficiency is paid in full and the amount of the previous erroneous micro entity fee payment. The total deficiency payment owed is the sum of the individual deficiency owed amounts for each fee amount previously and erroneously paid as a micro entity.

(3) If the requirements of paragraphs (k)(1) and (2) of this section are not complied with, such failure will either be treated at the option of the Office as an authorization for the Office to process the deficiency payment and charge the processing fee set forth in § 1.17(i), or result in a requirement for compliance within a one-month time period that is not extendable under § 1.136(a) to avoid the return of the fee deficiency payment.

(4) Any deficiency payment (based on a previous erroneous payment of a micro entity fee) submitted under this paragraph will be treated as a notification of a loss of entitlement to micro entity status under paragraph (i) of this section.

[77 FR 75033, Dec. 19, 2012, as amended at 78 FR 62396, Oct. 21, 2013; 80 FR 17955, Apr. 2, 2015]

Subpart B—National Processing Provisions

PROSECUTION OF APPLICATION AND APPOINTMENT OF ATTORNEY OR AGENT

§ 1.31 Applicant may be represented by one or more patent practitioners or joint inventors.

An applicant for patent may file and prosecute the applicant's own case, or

the applicant may give power of attorney so as to be represented by one or more patent practitioners or joint inventors, except that a juristic entity (*e.g.*, organizational assignee) must be represented by a patent practitioner even if the juristic entity is the applicant. The Office cannot aid in the selection of a patent practitioner.

[77 FR 48813, Aug. 14, 2012]

§ 1.32 Power of attorney.

(a) *Definitions.* (1) *Patent practitioner* means a registered patent attorney or registered patent agent under § 11.6.

(2) *Power of attorney* means a written document by which a principal authorizes one or more patent practitioners or joint inventors to act on the principal's behalf.

(3) *Principal* means the applicant (§ 1.42) for an application for patent and the patent owner for a patent, including a patent in a supplemental examination or reexamination proceeding. The principal executes a power of attorney designating one or more patent practitioners or joint inventors to act on the principal's behalf.

(4) *Revocation* means the cancellation by the principal of the authority previously given to a patent practitioner or joint inventor to act on the principal's behalf.

(5) *Customer Number* means a number that may be used to:

(i) Designate the correspondence address of a patent application or patent such that the correspondence address for the patent application, patent or other patent proceeding would be the address associated with the Customer Number;

(ii) Designate the fee address (§ 1.363) of a patent such that the fee address for the patent would be the address associated with the Customer Number; and

(iii) Submit a list of patent practitioners such that those patent practitioners associated with the Customer Number would have power of attorney.

(6) *Patent practitioner of record* means a patent practitioner who has been granted a power of attorney in an application, patent, or other proceeding in compliance with paragraph (b) of this section. The phrases practitioner of record and attorney or agent of

record also mean a patent practitioner who has been granted a power of attorney in an application, patent, or other proceeding in compliance with paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) A power of attorney must:

(1) Be in writing;

(2) Name one or more representatives in compliance with paragraph (c) of this section;

(3) Give the representative power to act on behalf of the principal; and

(4) Be signed by the applicant for patent (§ 1.42) or the patent owner. A patent owner who was not the applicant under § 1.46 must appoint any power of attorney in compliance with §§ 3.71 and 3.73 of this chapter.

(c) A power of attorney may only name as representative:

(1) One or more joint inventors (§ 1.45);

(2) Those registered patent practitioners associated with a Customer Number;

(3) Ten or fewer patent practitioners, stating the name and registration number of each patent practitioner. Except as provided in paragraph (c)(1) or (c)(2) of this section, the Office will not recognize more than ten patent practitioners as being of record in an application or patent. If a power of attorney names more than ten patent practitioners, such power of attorney must be accompanied by a separate paper indicating which ten patent practitioners named in the power of attorney are to be recognized by the Office as being of record in the application or patent to which the power of attorney is directed.

(d) A power of attorney from a prior national application for which benefit is claimed under 35 U.S.C. 120, 121, 365(c), or 386(c) in a continuing application may have effect in the continuing application if a copy of the power of attorney from the prior application is filed in the continuing application unless:

(1) The power of attorney was granted by the inventor; and

(2) The continuing application names an inventor who was not named as an inventor in the prior application.